

# MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT CARD PROGRAM BEGINS IN JUNE

U.S. CONGRESSMAN  
JERRY F. COSTELLO

As you may know, last November the U.S. Congress passed the Medicare reform plan proposed by President Bush.

I voted against the legislation because it makes major changes to the Medicare program, does not guarantee the same benefits for all seniors, relies heavily on the insurance industry to provide benefits and does nothing to control the cost of prescription drugs. I believe that the new law is good for the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, and not so good for our seniors.

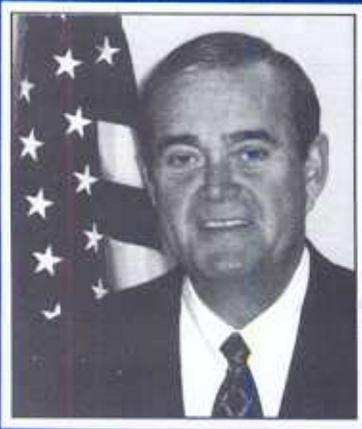
However, the legislation was passed and signed into law by President Bush. While most of the changes will not take effect until 2006, the prescription drug discount card program goes into effect in June. Therefore, it is important that seniors understand this new program.

If you choose to participate in the plan, I hope you find the information on the reverse side helpful to you. If you have questions, please call 1-800-MEDICARE, or on the Internet at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Sincerely,



Jerry F. Costello  
Member of Congress



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*"Seniors should not have to choose between buying their prescription drugs and buying food. I will continue to work to reduce the cost of prescription drugs."*

*- Congressman Jerry F. Costello*

# NEW MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT CARD PROGRAM: IS IT FOR YOU?

Medicare beneficiaries are receiving a lot of information about the Medicare prescription drug discount card program. Enrollment is underway and the program will be in effect from June 2004 through December 2005. There are a number of issues to keep in mind as you evaluate your options while deciding whether to participate in this program.

**KEY FACTS:**

- Who is eligible for the card and who offers the card? This voluntary program is open to all beneficiaries except those who also have Medicaid coverage. The cards are offered by private companies that receive approval from Medicare. Card sponsors can charge an annual fee of up to \$30.
- \$600 credit for certain low-income beneficiaries. Seniors and people with disabilities whose incomes are below \$12,569 (\$16,862 for couples) and who are not enrolled in Medicaid will be eligible for a \$600 credit toward the purchase of prescription drugs in 2004 and 2005.
- No minimum discount and covered drugs, discounts and pharmacies can vary. There is no guaranteed minimum discount under the law, and card sponsors are not required to pass on all of the savings. Each card may discount different drugs and the discounts and drugs that are offered can change weekly. Pharmacies that participate with the cards may also change during the year.
- Choose carefully. Although the cards can change their offerings weekly, seniors can enroll in just one Medicare-approved card and will only be allowed to change cards once at the end of this year.
- Beware of scam artists. Be wary of offers that sound too good to be true. Beneficiaries should never provide personal information to door-to-door salesmen or during unsolicited phone calls. Drug card sponsors must use approved application forms and the individual cards will carry the Medicare-approved logo. Any fraud or questionable behavior should be reported immediately to 1.800.MEDICARE.
- Need help? Seniors can get help by calling 1.800.MEDICARE, or on the Internet at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

U.S. Congressman Jerry F. Costello  
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